

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 0295

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, DA, XG

SUBJECT: RELATIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION AND CHRISTIAN LABOR CONFEDERATION

REF: USMISSION EC 0620

SUMMARY: THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT JANUARY 21-22 MEETING IN BRUSSELS
VOTED TO PERMIT EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS AFFILIATED TO
CHRISTIAN WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL TO
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AFFILIATE INDIVIDUALLY WITHOUT

RESIGING THEIR WCL MEMBERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. DANISH TRADE UNION (LO) INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY PEER CARLSEN GAVE LABATT RUN-DOWN ON JANUARY 24-25 MEETING OF EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN BRUSSELS. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF THE EAST-WEST TRADE UNION MEETING JUST COMPLETED IN GENEVA. THE MAJOR SUBJECT FOR CONSIDERATION WAS THE QUESTION OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE WCL-AFFILIATED UNIONS.

2. IN THIS DISCUSSION THOMAS NIELSEN, DANISH LO PRESIDENT HAD TAKEN VERY TOUGH LINE, ARGUING THAT WCL UNIONS COULD ONLY BE ADMITTED AFTER THEY WITHDREW FROM THE WCL. THIS CONSISTENT DANISH POSITION WAS BASED ON ARGUMENT THAT SAME QUALIFYING RESTRICTIONS MUST BE APPLIED TO BOTH CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNIST APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP. THE DANES ARE, OF COURSE, ANXIOUS TO REQUIRE THE FRENCH CGT AND ITALIAN CGIL TO GIVE UP EVEN OBSERVER STATUS IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU) PRIOR TO OBTAINING MEMBERSHIP IN THE ETUC.

3. AFTER PROLONGED DISCUSSION, THIS DANISH POSITION, SUPPORTED BY FORCE OUVRIER (FO) AMONG OTHERS, WAS DEFEATED IN THE FINAL VOTE, WHICH APPROVED INDIVIDUAL WCL UNION MEMBERSHIP TEN TO FIVE. CARLSEN SAID THE GERMAN DGB PLAYED A STRANGE ROLE ON THIS VOTE, THOUGH HE DID NOT SAY HOW THEY VOTED. THE RESOLUTION AS PASSED DRAWS A DEFINITE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETUC'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE ICFTU AND TO THE WCL. THE WCL, UNLIKE THE ICFTU, IS NOT PERMITTED TO HAVE AN OBSERVER ON THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ETUC AND THE WCL WILL BE LIMITED TO A MERE EXCHANGE OF DOCUMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO SECRETARIATS.

4. CARLSEN SAID THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE INFERRED FROM THIS VOTE THAT ALL TEN MEMBERS WHO VOTED YES DID SO BECAUSE THEY FAVORED MEMBERSHIP OF THE ITALIAN AND FRENCH COMMUNIST UNIONS. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEM MIGHT CONSIDER THE VOTE A MEANS OF EASING THE STANDARDS FOR SUCH MEMBERSHIP, OTHERS, CONFIDENTIAL

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LIKE THE DUTCH NVV, WHICH OPPOSES CGT MEMBERSHIP VOTED IN FAVOR ARGUING THAT A DIFFERENT STANDARD SHOULD BE APPLIED TO WCL UNIONS THAN TO COMMUNIST UNIONS.

5. THEREAFTER, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TOOK UP THE ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ITALIAN CGIL. THE COMMITTEE VOTED TO ENDORSE THE ACTIONS TAKEN THUS FAR AND TO APPROVE CONTINUED EFFORTS TOWARD EVENTUAL (NO TIME-FRAME

INDICATED) AFFILIATION OF THE CGIL. CARLSEN SAID HE
OPPOSED A VOTE BEING TAKEN BECAUSE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH
VOTE ON WCL, IT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO IMPLY THAT THE CGIL
COULD AFFILIATE WITHOUT A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE WFTU.
CARLSEN CONCLUDED THAT THE LATTER QUESTION IS NOW A
VERY MUDDY ONE AND NO PREDICATIONS ARE POSSIBLE AS TO WHAT
LINE THE ETUC WOULD EVENTUALLY TAKE ON AFFILIATION OF
THE COMMUNIST UNIONS.
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